

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.56 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Michael Firmager and Emma Hobbs

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery
Lyndsay Jennings, Legal Specialist
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Marcia Head, Development Management Team Leader
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Andrew Chugg
Sophie Morris
Simon Taylor

58. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillors Gary Cowan and Malcolm Richards.

59. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

61. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

**62. APPLICATION NO. 191949 - LAND AT MATTHEWSGREEN FARM,
MATTHEWSGREEN ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 1JX**

Proposal: Application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission ref. O/2014/2242 for a revised layout and design of part of Phase 4, comprising an additional 26 dwellings (to the 248 approved under reserved matters applications 172751 and 181888); the erection of 33 dwellings within Phase 4d and 81 dwellings within Phase 5, together with associated amenity spaces, garages, parking, internal roads, pathways, drainage and associated landscaping. (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be considered).

Applicant: Bovis Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 17 to 50.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Addition to part A of the Committee recommendation;
- Addition of numerous drawing numbers under condition 2;
- Clarification of paragraph 54 regarding garden depths.

Peter Warren, agent, spoke in support of the application. Peter stated that he was speaking on behalf of Bovis Homes and they were collectively happy with the Officer recommendation. Peter added that the proposals were in keeping with the surrounding area and within the parameters of the outline permission. Peter stated that these plans removed the 3 storey block and replaced it with 4 smaller scale apartment blocks with the third floor being incorporated into the eaves of the roofs, with additional landscaping and tree planting present. Peter added that only one access point would be delivered on site, down from 3 approved at outline. This was in response to neighbour and Highways Officers highways safety concerns. Peter concluded by stating that there would be a 50m landscape buffer along the Twyford Road, and additional open space would be delivered as a part of phase 5 of the development.

Simon Weeks commented that the extra care facility was no longer required on site, and was removed by the developer at the request of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). Simon added that there was an increase in on-site affordable housing and the Town and Parish Council's objections had been addressed.

Stephen Conway commented that this development would place additional pressure on Twyford train station, and queried whether part of the developer contribution could be used to improve parking at Twyford station and provide a shuttle bus service to and from the Matthewsgreen development. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the original S106 agreement had flexibility built in, and proposals were being assessed by WBC's public transport team. Judy added that a bus stop was present adjacent to the Matthewsgreen development. Stephen Conway proposed that an informative be added, stating that the Committee asked that WBC and Bovis Homes work together to achieve frequent peak hour public transport links between the Matthewsgreen development site and Twyford train station, in order to relieve car parking pressure at the station. This proposal was seconded and added to the list of informatives that formed part of the Officer recommendation.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the affordable housing mix was appropriate, and how the local labour informative would be enforced. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations: Planning Delivery, stated that WBC's affordable housing team had advised that the mix of affordable housing was suitable and met the required needs of the area. Connor added that there was a team within WBC that assessed opportunities for local labour, and where possible WBC worked with developers to give local people apprenticeships at local developments. There was however a limit to what could be offered at a local level, but where possible local apprenticeships were awarded.

RESOLVED That application number 191949 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives set out in agenda pages 18 to 21, additional informative as resolved by the Committee, addition to part A of the Officer recommendation as set out in the Members' Update and addition of drawing numbers under condition 2 as set out in the Members' Update.

63. APPLICATION NO. 192285 - SILVERSTOCK MANOR, SANDHURST ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 3JE

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a 2 (two) storey extension to enlarge existing dwelling.

Applicant: Mr Nicholas Prior

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 51 to 66.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

Andrew Chugg, Case Officer, informed the Committee that the following additional informative was recommended to be added to the Officer recommendation: "Notwithstanding the red line on the submitted location plan, the Council considers that not all of the application site is within residential curtilage". This was moved, seconded and added to the list of informatives as set out within the Officer recommendation.

Pauline Jorgensen queried why this application was CIL liable. Andrew Chugg clarified that the extension would be over 100m² and therefore liable for CIL.

RESOLVED That application number 192285 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 52 to 53 and additional informative as resolved by the Committee on the advice of the Case Officer.

64. APPLICATION NO. 192648 - THE HOMESTEAD, PARK LANE, CHARVIL, RG10 9TR

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 3no. commercial warehouse buildings for storage (Class B8) use (retrospective)

Applicant: Mr M Bicknell

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 67 to 88.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included clarification that Local Ward Member Emma Hobbs had submitted concerns regarding this application, and inclusion of said concerns.

Emma Hobbs, Ward Member, raised concern with aspects of this application. Emma stated that she had no objection to the applicant's business, and was supportive of the jobs that the applicant had created locally over the years. Emma commented that the road was quite narrow, with a lorry and a car struggling to pass each other. Emma added that with the size of the business growing as it was, it was becoming a little bit too big for a residential area with a school and 25 newly approved houses due to be built. Emma was of the opinion that it may be time for the applicant to explore a separate site in a less residential area to provide for this expanding business. Emma concluded by stating that should this application be approved she hoped her comments would be taken into consideration when considering any future applications.

Stephen Conway queried whether there was contradiction between CP11 and the NPPF with regards to this application. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, stated that the NPPF applied

to expansion of an existing business within a rural setting, whereas CP11 was designed to protect the characteristics of a rural setting with no business structures already present. Marcia Head, Development Management Team Leader, added that this application would be refused should the land have been an empty green field, but by granting planning permission it gave Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) control over the storage provision on site.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether a detailed parking plan should be submitted prior to approval being granted. Simon Taylor stated that there were historic permissions off site which included limiting vehicle movements and allowing 9 staff cars and 6 cess pool emptying vehicles parking. Simon added that there was likely to be a departure from these conditions due to the current number of vehicles present on site and this could be subject to enforcement action in future.

Angus Ross queried whether the site had always been situated within its current curtilage. Simon Taylor clarified that the site had roughly doubled in size over the last 10 to 15 years.

Abdul Loyes queried whether the buildings on site would need planning permission to change from a class B1 to a B8 unit or vice versa. Simon Taylor stated that planning permission would be required to vary a unit from a B1 to a B8 or vice versa.

The Committee raised concerns with the history of retrospective planning applications on site. Simon Weeks proposed that an informative be added, strongly advising the applicant to ensure that all future planning applications were not retrospective. This proposal was seconded and added to the list of informatives set out in the Officer recommendation.

Emma Hobbs commented that the applicant had always been very responsive to her requests as Ward Member in the past.

RESOLVED That application number 192648 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 68 to 69, and the additional informative as resolved by the Committee.

65. APPLICATION NO. 192713 - THE HOMESTEAD, PARK LANE, CHARVIL, RG10 9TR

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. commercial storage building (Use Class B8) (retrospective)

Applicant: Mr M Bicknell

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 89 to 106.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included clarification that Local Ward Member Emma Hobbs had submitted concerns regarding this application, and inclusion of said concerns.

Emma Hobbs, Ward Member, raised concern with aspects of this application. Emma stated that she had no objection to the applicant's business, and was supportive of the jobs that the applicant had created locally over the years. Emma commented that the road was quite narrow, with a lorry and a car struggling to pass each other. Emma added that with the size of the business growing as it was, it was becoming a little bit too big for a

residential area with a school and 25 newly approved houses to be built. Emma was of the opinion that it may be time for the applicant to explore a separate site in a less residential area to provide for this expanding business. Emma concluded by stating that should this application be approved she hoped her comments would be taken into consideration of any future applications.

Carl Doran queried how this development was brought to Officer's attention. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, confirmed that a separate application involving permission for caravans was being reviewed when this development was noticed.

The Committee raised concerns with the history of retrospective planning applications on site. Simon Weeks proposed that an informative be added, strongly advising the applicant to ensure that all future planning applications were not retrospective. This proposal was seconded and added to the list of informatives set out in the Officer recommendation.

Emma Hobbs commented that the applicant had always been very responsive to her requests as Ward Member in the past.

RESOLVED That application number 192713 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 90 to 91, and the additional informative as resolved by the Committee.

66. APPLICATION NO. 192244 - HEATHLANDS FARM, HONEY HILL, WOKINGHAM, RG40 3BG

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the east elevation of the existing soft fruit processing plant to provide additional space for automated processing and packaging

Applicant: Hall Hunter Partnership

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 107 to 124.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Update.

Peter Izod, agent, spoke in support of the application. Peter stated that the applicant was one of the largest soft fruit producers in the UK, servicing almost all of the major UK supermarkets. This application was designed to tidy up the storage on site, with this application being situated on an existing hardstanding surface. Peter added that the site was screened well and was not visible to other locations.

Angus Ross commented that this was an immensely successful business, with this application proposing to replace a temporary storage solution. Angus added that once the southern distributor road was completed it would allow for safer access from Nine Mile Ride.

Stephen Conway queried why there was a condition that related to imported goods being specified as outside of the Wokingham Borough. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, clarified that this was a condition dating back to 2007 that had been carried over.

RESOLVED That application number 192244 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives set out in agenda pages 108 to 110.

67. APPLICATION NO. 192245 - HEATHLANDS FARM, HONEY HILL, WOKINGHAM, RG40 3BG

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the east elevation of the existing soft fruit processing plant to provide additional space for automated processing and packaging

Applicant: Hall Hunter Partnership

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 125 to 142.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Update.

Peter Izod, agent, spoke in support of the application. Peter stated that the applicant was one of the largest soft fruit producers in the UK, servicing almost all of the major UK supermarkets. This application was designed to tidy up the storage on site, with this application being situated on an existing hardstanding surface. Peter added that the site was screened well and was not visible to other locations. Peter clarified that there were 320 seasonal workers on the site, with 130 full time workers also present.

RESOLVED That application number 192245 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives set out in agenda pages 126 to 128.

68. APPLICATION NO. 192312 - THE ATRIUM AND POOL COURT, THAMES STREET, SONNING, RG4 6UR

Proposal: Full application for the proposed construction of an external swimming pool and ornamental pond to the rear of The Atrium, regrading of garden land at Pool Court (retrospective) and amendments to approved landscaping schemes proposed in connection with applications 181850, 173369 (Pool Court) and 180857 (The Atrium)

Applicant: Mr and Mrs T and C Murphy

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 143 to 172.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that due to the Christmas and New Year period, it was appropriate to extend the submission deadlines of lighting and landscaping details (Conditions 3 and 4) by a month;
- Removal of references to Pool Court in the heading and content of Condition 13.

Trefor Fisher, Sonning Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Trefor stated that Sonning parish Council felt strongly about this application and had taken professional advice over a number of issues relating to this application. Trefor stated that the Parish Council appreciated the withdrawal of the tennis court lighting, and noted that some further plan submissions were still required. Trefor added that this site had a history of retrospective planning applications, and noted that the land had been raised on the north-western side of the Atrium. Trefor was of the opinion that the proposals would have a negative effect on the soft edge of the site, and asked that this application be deferred until the additional plans had been submitted and fully consulted on. Trefor stated that the

Parish Council would like a formal condition limiting the outbuilding to incidental usage only, and a further condition prohibiting tennis court lighting in future.

Adrian Gould, agent, spoke in support of the application. Adrian clarified that it was the previous owners' wishes to demolish the existing structures, however this was not the intentions of the current owners who instead wanted to improve the site. Adrian stated that the proposed driveway was outside of the root protection area of the nearest tree, and clarified that it was not a material consideration to change the boundary of two existing properties. Adrian added that the replacement tennis court was lower than the previous court and was therefore less conspicuous to neighbours. Adrian stated that the rear boundary would now be covered by a native hedgerow, which had a positive impact on the views from the towpath. Adrian added that drainage proposals had been approved with building control, and surface and foul water drainage proposals had also been agreed.

Michael Firmager, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Michael stated that the Atrium would be visible from the towpath and the proposals could have a negative impact on drainage. Michael added that if these two issues were resolved, he had no further issues with this application. Michael stated that he was determined to protect the character of the historic Sonning village, with this application being situated within the Sonning conservation area.

Simon Weeks queried what the balance was when considering this application with a conservation area, and whether the proposals would be visible from the towpath. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, stated that the tennis court lighting had been removed from the application as it was not deemed to have fitted in within the context of the conservation area. With regards to the towpath view, Simon Taylor stated that there was a hedgerow along the site boundary with some further replacement trees due to be planted. The landscaping Officer had found the proposals acceptable and it was conditioned that the natural ground levels be retained.

Simon Weeks queried whether condition 13 stopped the outbuilding being used on office, and whether a condition could be added to stop tennis court lighting being installed. Simon Taylor stated that both condition 13 and the additional comments contained within the Members' Update restricted the usage of the outbuilding to incidental usage. With regards to the tennis court lighting, Simon Taylor stated that a condition could not be added that precluded a future planning application. It was clarified that a planning application would be required prior to installation of any tennis court lighting in future.

Stephen Conway queried whether more emphasis could be added to condition 10, to allow the protection of trees within the conservation area beyond the standard 5 year time limit. Simon Weeks suggested that clarification be added to the reasoning behind condition 10, this was subsequently seconded and agreed by the Committee.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the Committee could be confident that the proposed landscaping changes would not lead to additional flooding. Simon Weeks stated that via the consultation responses, drainage Officers had raised no objections to the proposals and they were acting in their professional capacity as experts in this area. Simon Taylor added that hard surfacing was only being added to permeable areas of the site and the swimming pool.

RESOLVED That application number 192312 be approved, subject to conditions and informative as set out in agenda pages 144 to 148, extension of the submission deadlines relating to Conditions 3 and 4 as set out in the Members' Update, removal of reference to Pool Court in the heading and content of Condition 13 as set out in the Members' Update, and additional clarification of the reasoning behind Condition 10 as resolved by the Committee.